



RECREATION MAKES COMMUNITIES HEALTHIER

Recreation is an important part of being physically and mentally healthy. It is well known and supported by evidence that physical inactivity is one of the biggest risk factors for chronic disease such as heart disease and diabetes. Recreation also helps us reduce stress and anxiety. But did you also know that recreation plays a key role in the health of our communities?

Social isolation is also a risk factor for chronic disease. Individuals and communities are healthier when members feel connected to each other. In fact, social connectedness is just as important for our health as diet and exercise.

Recreation offers opportunities for a community to connect. Local governments can play a key role in supporting and creating opportunities for social connectedness in our communities. Community members can encourage and support local governments to create policies, planning, programs, and community design that promote social connectedness.

Recreational activities can be physical, social, cultural or artistic. Community infrastructure such as parks, libraries, bicycle pathways, playing fields and community centres are just a few examples of how local governments can support the health of its citizens and the social connectedness of a community.

June is Parks and Recreation Month the perfect time to start including more recreation in our everyday lives. We are especially fortunate in B.C. to have incredible open spaces and beautiful parks to explore natural forms of recreation in all seasons. So grab a neighbour or two and get out there and enjoy!

Providing opportunities for recreation is one of several ways citizens and governments can help create a healthy community. If you want to learn more visit PlanH (<http://planh.ca>).

Have fun!

AUTHOR: JULIE STEFFLER IS A COMMUNITY HEALTH FACILITATOR WITH INTERIOR HEALTH